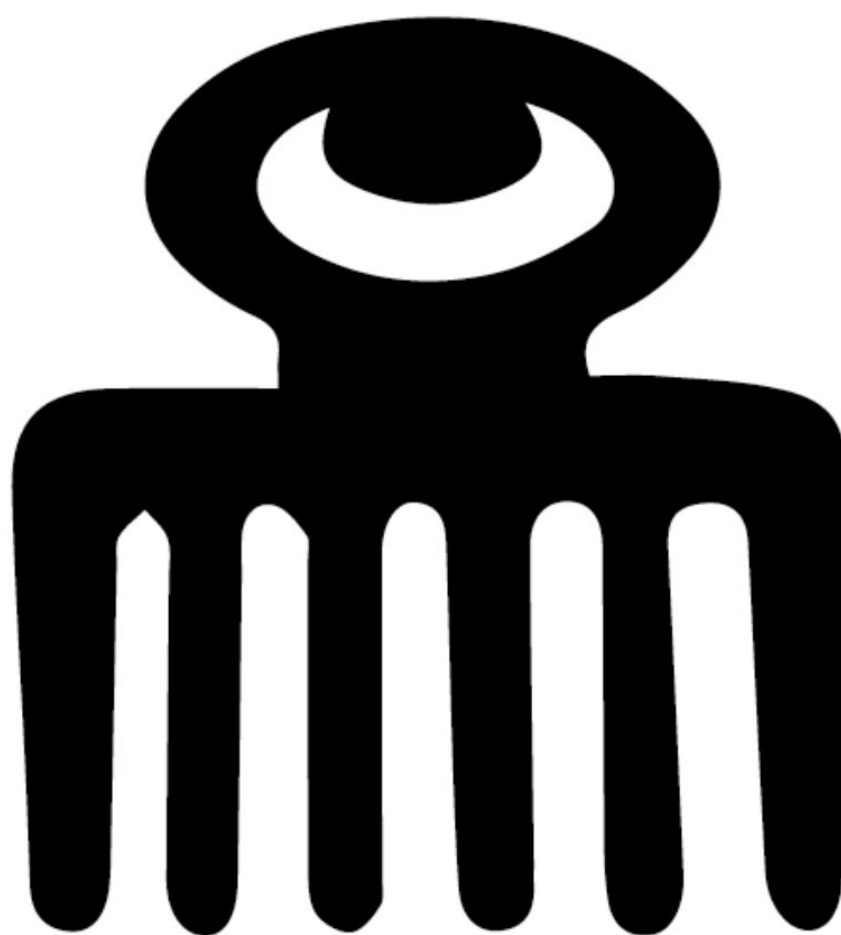


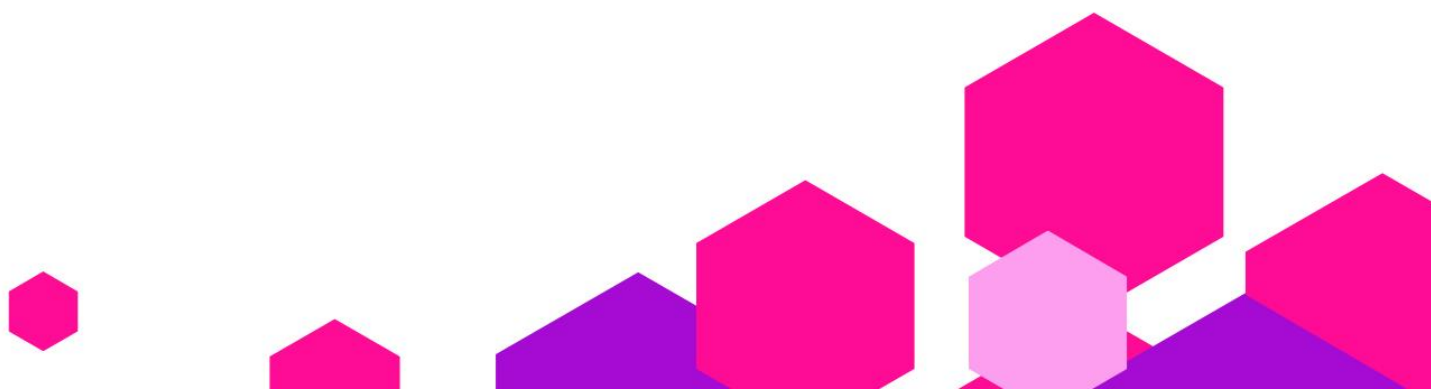


COURAGEOUS SISTERS GHANA
Empowering Women Through Love And Unity



SOLIDARITY CONVENING

REPORT 2024



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Executive Summary

The Solidarity Convening, held from the 13th to the 17th of May 2024 in the beautiful city of Accra, Ghana, by Courageous Sisters Ghana marked an important moment in the advocacy history for minority rights in the country. In the face of increasing legislative threats and societal hostility, the convening served as an important platform to strengthen the local movement, enhance collaboration among allies, and provide the right atmosphere to formulate strategies for sustained advocacy.

The convening, which was attended by eighty (80) human rights defenders (HRD) from diverse advocacy backgrounds saw key activities including a beautiful opening ceremony with keynote speeches and inspirational stories from activists and community leaders. Several panel discussions were held throughout the week-long program exploring the socio-political landscape and opportunities available to HRD. Topics around legal support strategies, safety and security, mental health, and the concept of “leaving no one behind” was heavily explored to yield outcomes that will serve as a guiding framework for future advocacy efforts, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. The success of the Solidarity Convening reinforces the collective commitment to minority rights in Ghana.

Total Participants

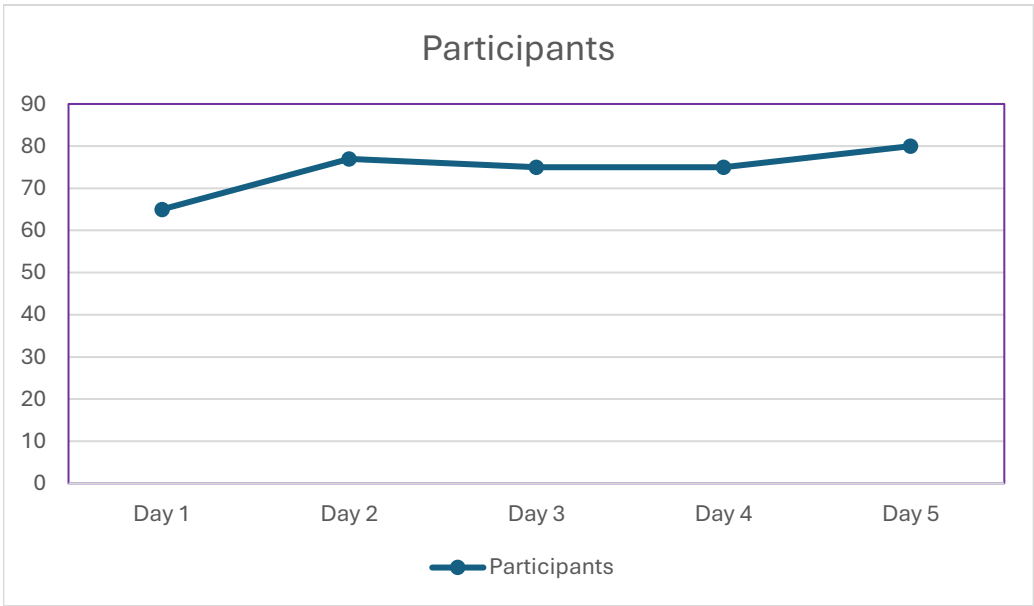
80

Workshops

27

Attendance

98%



Opening Statement from the Executive Director

Welcome to our Solidarity Convening—an extraordinary gathering of LGBTIQ+ Activists, grassroots

community members, feminist partners, intersex persons, ethnic women, sex workers and persons living with disabilities. Today, we come together not only as representatives of our respective communities but as builders of change, united in our shared commitment to equity, justice, and liberation.

This convening is more than just a conference; it is a testament to the power of collective action and solidarity. It reflects our unwavering belief in the transformative potential of collaboration and community-building. As we embark on this journey together, let us pause to acknowledge the richness and diversity of our assembly—the countless identities, experiences, and perspectives that converge within these walls.

For too long, our communities have been marginalized, silenced, and erased by systems of oppression. We have faced discrimination, violence, and exclusion simply for daring to exist authentically in a world that often seeks to confine us to narrow, restrictive categories. But today, in this space of solidarity, we reclaim our narratives, our identities, and our agency.

Throughout this convening, we will engage in courageous conversations, challenging dialogues, and transformative exchanges. We will confront the intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization that impact our lives and our communities. We will explore strategies for dismantling oppressive systems and building inclusive, affirming spaces where every individual can thrive.

As we gather here today, let us remember that solidarity is not simply a theoretical concept—it is a lived experience, a daily commitment to standing in solidarity with one another, amplifying each other's voices, and advocating for the rights and dignity of all. It is about recognizing that our struggles are interconnected, that our liberation is bound up with one another, and that we are stronger together than we could ever be alone.

In the spirit of solidarity, let us honour the resilience, the strength, and the beauty of our communities. Let us celebrate the victories, however small, and recommit ourselves to the ongoing struggle for justice and equality. Let us create spaces of belonging, where every individual feels seen, heard, and valued for who they are. As we embark on this journey together, may we be guided by compassion, empathy, and a deep sense of solidarity. May we leave this convening inspired, empowered, and energized in our shared pursuit of a more just and equitable world.

Thank you for your presence, your passion, and your unwavering dedication to the principles of solidarity. Let us begin this journey together, with open hearts and minds, ready to listen, learn, and grow.

Welcome to Courageous Sisters Ghana Solidarity Convening entitled; “**Empowering Voices**”.



Executive Director ~ Sarah Shika Fleischer

Staff and Volunteers



The staff of Courageous Sisters Ghana played an exceptional role in the success of the convening through their dedication, teamwork, and professionalism. From the initial planning to the execution, the team meticulously coordinated logistics, managed resources, and handled challenges efficiently, ensuring a smooth and well-organized event.

The staff's commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment was evident in their support to participants and their keen attention to detail in managing the event's flow. Their efforts ensured that sessions transitioned seamlessly, and participant needs were promptly addressed, enhancing the overall experience. The team's ability to embody the values of Courageous Sisters Ghana was a significant asset and a testament to the staff's hard work, dedication, and commitment to justice and equality, leaving a lasting impact on all who participated.

This contribution has set a high standard for future events and highlighted the invaluable role staff members play in advancing the organization's mission.

Convening Activities



**DAY 1: EMPOWERING VOICES:
UNITING FOR EQUITY AND
JUSTICE**



**DAY 2: ADVANCING RIGHTS:
STRATEGIES FOR GENDER
EQUALITY AND HUMAN
RIGHTS**



**DAY 3: BREAKING BARRIERS:
CONFRONTING
DISCRIMINATION AND
BUILDING RESILIENCE**



**DAY 4: REIMAGINING
TOMORROW: AN INCLUSIVE
AND EMPOWERED FUTURE**



**DAY 5: COLLECTIVE CARE AND
CELEBRATION: FINDING COMMUNITY
AMIDST THE CHAOS**

DAY ONE



A key session of the conference was the panel discussion on "Empowering Voices," featuring diverse representatives from the advocacy and support sectors. The panellists explored the concept of empowerment, defining it as the ability to control one's life and make independent decisions. They highlighted the importance of emotional, mental, and financial liberty and emphasized creating supportive environments where individuals feel safe and respected.

The role of media literacy in combating anti-right legislatures was another significant topic the panel explored. Notably, the absence or limited education on sexual and gender minority issues, unprofessionalism and personal biases of some journalists, as well as the lack of independence of some media houses contribute to the problem. Strategies for advancing the rights of minority groups were proposed to include education, mentorship, advocacy, legal support, community organizing, and agenda setting. The importance of celebrating the achievements of minority communities was emphasized to raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes.

The panel also explored mentorship as a crucial tool for empowering individuals to reach their full potential. They stressed the need for mentorship opportunities for marginalized communities to develop necessary skills and knowledge, thereby reducing stigmatization and rejection.

The Solidarity Convening themed "**Empowering Voices**," was attended by feminist partners, intersex persons, persons living with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ persons, sex workers and ethnic women, emphasizing the importance of solidarity in achieving social justice. The opening of the conference saw inspiring speeches from the Executive Director of Courageous Sisters Ghana, and representatives from various organizations and embassies who highlighted the need to empower minority groups with the right tools and resources to live dignified lives.



DAY TWO

Day 2 of the convening was marked by a series of engaging sessions that brought together diverse voices to address critical issues related to human rights, gender equality, and the challenges faced by minority groups in Ghana. The day began with a preliminary session that focused on community bonding exercises. This allowed participants to connect with one another and thereby fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment that set the tone for the day's discussions.

The highlight of the morning was the one-on-one conversation on the Affirmative Action Gender Equality Bill. This session delved into the bill's objectives, challenges, and status, exploring its potential to address historical injustices faced by women in Ghana. Panellists discussed how the bill aims to bridge gender disparities by promoting fair representation and providing opportunities for women in leadership positions. However, the discussion also highlighted significant barriers, including societal resistance, patriarchal norms, and a lack of political will, which have hindered the bill's progress.

The day continued with three parallel sessions that examined the broader human rights landscape. The first session focused on the significance of human rights mechanisms in collective struggles, emphasizing the need for international and regional advocacy to protect marginalized groups. The second session addressed the pervasive human rights violations against gender and sexual minorities in Ghana, revealing systemic barriers and highlighting the urgent need for stronger support networks. The final session centred on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), exploring its implementation challenges and the need for increased awareness and resources to advance gender equality.

Key findings from the sessions emphasised the need for enhanced advocacy, public awareness, and collaboration between stakeholders to promote human rights and gender equality in Ghana. Moving forward, it is crucial to strengthen partnerships between civil society, government, and international bodies to address the identified challenges. Educational campaigns and training programs need to be implemented to raise awareness of CEDAW and other human rights mechanisms, while continued efforts are needed to document human rights violations and support marginalized communities. The convening reinforced the importance of collective action in creating a more inclusive and equitable society for all.



DAY THREE



Day 3 of the convening consisted of several insightful sessions addressing critical topics. The day started with a session on the "**State and Implications of the Anti-LGBTIQ+ Bill**," which explored the impact of the proposed legislation on LGBTQI+ individuals and organizations in Ghana. Panellists highlighted the bill's potential to intensify discrimination, violence, and public health risks, particularly for LGBTQI+ youth and persons living with HIV/AIDS. Key challenges discussed included digital threats like cyberstalking and online harassment, which have compounded emotional distress and social isolation among the community. The session called for unified efforts to reject the bill and promote inclusivity and human rights.

The day continued with a session titled "**Breaking Barriers: Dispelling Myths and Misconceptions about Persons Living with Disabilities**." This session aimed to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about disabilities, emphasizing the importance of inclusive language, accessible environments, and equal opportunities. Participants discussed the pervasive negative attitudes and lack of awareness that contribute to discrimination against persons with disabilities.

The session recommended developing disability awareness programs, inclusive policies, and creating accessible resources to foster a more equitable society.

Another session, "**Let's Talk Consent**," focused on preventative activism, particularly among youth, by promoting understanding and respect for human dignity, personal space, and individual rights. Through interactive discussions, participants explored the components of consent, emphasizing its ongoing nature and the importance of clear communication in relationships. The session encouraged the integration of consent education into curricula, the organization of awareness events, and the promotion of digital safety to combat cyberbullying and other online threats.

The day concluded with discussions on promoting mental health and wellness through intentional dialogue. The session highlighted the role of community support, shared experiences, and open conversations in addressing mental stressors like vulnerability, financial issues, and societal constraints. Participants were encouraged to engage in self-care, establish support networks, and advocate for mental health policies that prioritize well-being. The session called for continued mental health education and the development of resources to support marginalized individuals facing stigma and discrimination.

DAY FOUR

Day 4 of the convening featured five sessions that delved into various topics essential for promoting health, inclusivity, and economic empowerment. The sessions covered Safe Sex and Healthy Intimacy, Challenges of Championing LBQ Women's Issues, Unique Challenges of Older LGBTIQ+ Community Folks, Diversity and Inclusion, and Economic Empowerment for marginalized groups.

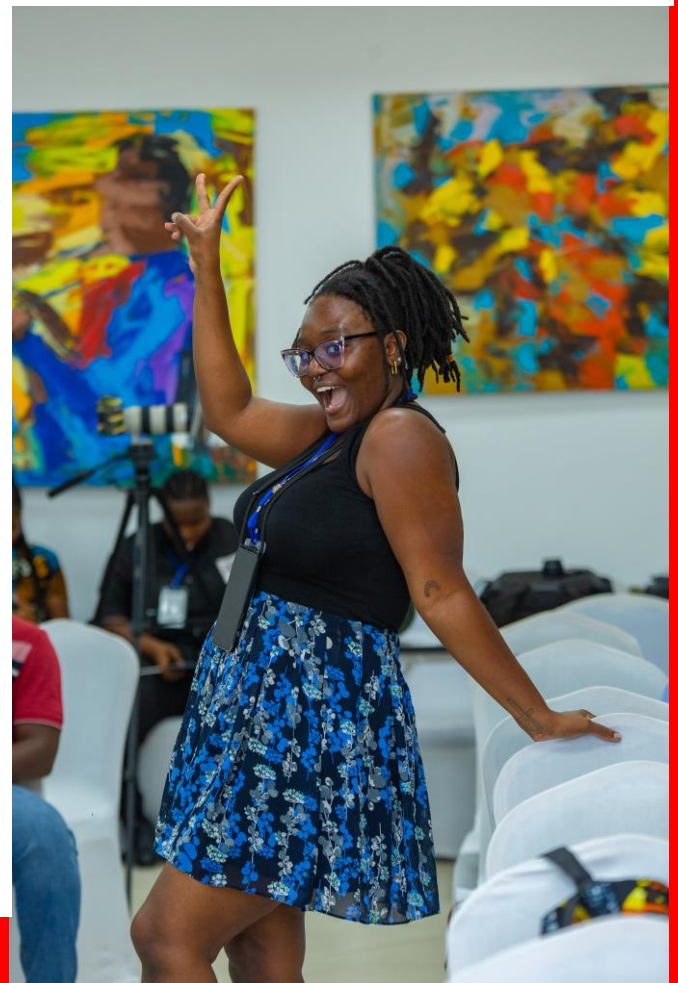
Key findings included the importance of safe sex practices and healthy intimacy, highlighting emotional connection, consent, and communication in relationships. The discussion on LBQ women's issues stressed the need for inclusivity within the feminist movement and identified significant barriers such as discrimination and lack of resources. Older LGBTIQ+ individuals were found to face unique challenges, including social isolation, financial insecurity, and lack of competent healthcare, necessitating targeted support. The discussion on diversity and inclusion underlined the need for creating safe spaces, adopting inclusive policies, and promoting equity within organizations. Economic empowerment was highlighted as critical, with emphasis on the need to address discrimination and provide resources, training, and financial literacy programs for marginalized groups.

The way forward as discussed includes implementing inclusive and supportive strategies across these areas. For safe sex and intimacy, enhancing awareness and fostering open communication about consent and boundaries are crucial.

To amplify LBQ voices in the feminist movement, organizations should promote intersectionality, provide educational initiatives, and increase funding for LBQ-specific issues. Support for older LGBTIQ+ individuals can be strengthened by creating funds and inclusive policies that cater to their needs.

Promoting diversity and inclusion within organizations requires ongoing education, feedback mechanisms, and equitable practices. Economic empowerment initiatives should also focus on training, mentorship, and financial education to help marginalized groups navigate economic challenges.

Day 4 highlighted critical gaps and opportunities for advancing inclusivity, health, and economic empowerment for marginalized communities. The inspiring sessions provided valuable insights and actionable steps to foster a supportive environment that respects and uplifts all individuals, ensuring that marginalized voices are heard and valued in the broader movement.



DAY FIVE



Day 5 of the convening featured two key sessions: a Collective Care wellness program at the Legon Botanical Gardens and a closing cocktail and IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia) celebration at the venue. The wellness program was designed to promote relaxation, creativity, and socialization among participants, while the closing cocktail celebrated community resilience and solidarity amidst challenges faced by the LGBTIQ+ community.

The Collective Care session was held in a serene environment that allowed participants to relax and engage in activities that promoted overall well-being. Participants engaged in various games such as Ludu, Scrabble, Monopoly, and card games, fostering camaraderie and healthy competition. The highlight of the session was the sip and paint activity, where participants expressed their creativity on canvas, providing a therapeutic outlet for self-expression and relaxation. This session successfully allowed participants to recharge and connect in a meaningful way, away from the formal conference setting.

The closing cocktail and IDAHOBIT celebration focused on building community and solidarity. The event kicked off with an impactful IDAHOBIT statement by the Executive Director of Courageous Sisters Ghana, which highlighted the ongoing fight against discrimination and the importance of unity. The session included speeches from various organizational leaders, touching on themes of LGBTIQ+ activism, spirituality, and the intersectionality of feminism and LGBTIQ+ rights. These speeches provided insights into the challenges faced by the community and emphasized the need for continued support, acceptance, and advocacy.

IDAHOBIT STATEMENT

Finding Community Amidst the Chaos.

The International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOT) is a painful reminder of the ongoing fight for LGBTQ+ rights and respect in Ghana and many other parts of the world. In the face of prejudice, cultural stigma, and legal obstacles, finding community becomes a potent act of resistance in addition to a source of comfort. As we celebrate IDAHOT this year with the theme "Finding Community Amidst the Chaos," let's take a moment to consider the tenacity and fortitude of Ghana's LGBTQ+ community and reaffirm our dedication to creating a society that is more inclusive and equitable for all.

Amidst the chaos of discrimination and the passage of the anti-LGBT bill, individuals in Ghana have sought refuge and solidarity within their communities through informal networks of friends, chosen families, organized advocacy groups and support organizations. Finding community has been a lifeline for many of us. These spaces provide a sense of belonging, understanding, and mutual support in the face of adversity. They offer a sanctuary where individuals can be their authentic selves without fear of judgment or persecution. However, the journey is not without its challenges.

Let's commemorate the resilience and strength of the LGBTQ+ community and renew our dedication to solidarity and allyship as we celebrate IDAHOT in Ghana. It is important to acknowledge that discovering a sense of community involves more than just looking for safety; it also entails developing a sense of group identity, creating venues where people are accepted and valued for who they are. It is about fighting for a future where equality is maintained, and diversity is welcomed by banding together in the face of hardship. Community-based efforts are at the forefront of promoting social change and fighting repressive practices to offering safe spaces for LGBTQ+ adolescents.

Moving forward, let us work towards creating a Ghana where LGBTQ+ individuals can live safely and authentically, free from discrimination and violence. Let us continue to advocate for the repeal of discriminatory laws and encourage the enactment of policies that protect the rights and dignity of all persons regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Let us amplify the voices of those who have been silenced and marginalized and let us strive to create a society where everyone can find community, acceptance, and love.

We should all remember that amidst the chaos, there is strength in community. Together, we can overcome adversity, challenge injustice, and build a more inclusive and equitable Ghana for all.

Happy IDAHOBIT!

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Picture Galary





Feed back Analysis

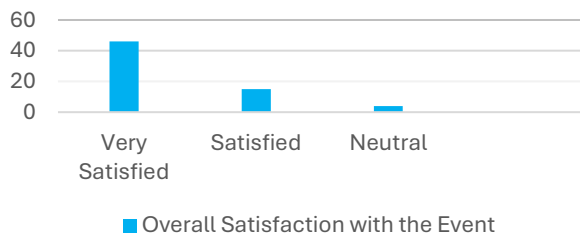
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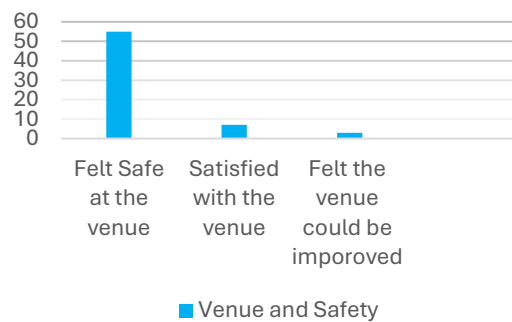
Response rate:

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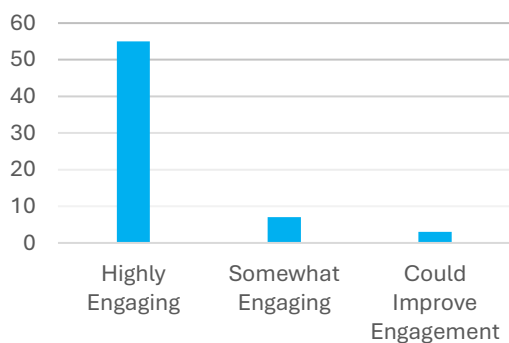
OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE EVENT



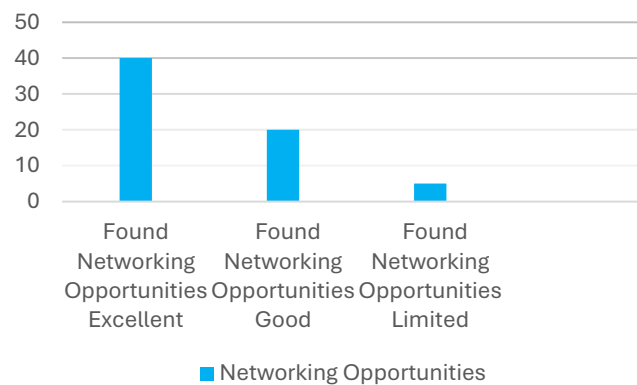
VENUE AND SAFETY



FACILITATION AND ENGAGEMENT



NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES



"I'm so glad and excited that we the ethnic women (traditional healers) got the opportunity to participate in the solidarity convening, it really felt like home because we were safe to be around everyone without the fear of being discriminated on . Thank you for making us feel wanted and valued because our calling has brought so much stigma to us".

Naa Yoomo Busiafi, Wokpee Initiative.

"this convening was more than just sessions and discussions—it was a vibrant space of solidarity, growth, and inspiration. it ignited passion, fostered new connections, and reminded us all that our collective power is unstoppable in the face of adversity."

Gorman,
Solace Initiative

"As a person living with disability and also queer, i find myself in different layers of minority space. Coming to the solidarity convening was very difficult because I've been called names within the community, so i isolated myself. But attending the convening brought back a level of confidence and belonging."

Martin, Positive Action Initiative.



"I didn't know what to really expect when I received the invitation but I said let me just come and learn because we are a young organization and upon attending this convening and having the opportunity to access a lot of side events, I'm going back with rich learnings."

Angle, Equity Sisters Ghana

"this convening provided a safe space for diverse voices to come together, connect, and drive change. It wasn't just a gathering; it was a catalyst for collective action and growth. Truly a reminder that together, we are stronger."

Adisa
(AD), Community of Action Facilitator Ghana – F2BM Program

Achievements



The various sessions raised awareness about pressing issues, including the Anti-LGBTQ+ Bill, gender equality, and human rights violations. This knowledge empowers participants to advocate more effectively, challenge discriminatory policies, and push for legal reforms that promote inclusivity and protect vulnerable populations



By including diverse voices, including young activists, queer elders, and those from various marginalized communities, the convening bridged generational and intersectional gaps. This strengthened the movement by ensuring a more inclusive approach to activism that values all experiences and perspectives, ultimately creating a more unified front in the fight against discrimination.

The convening provided a platform for participants to connect, share experiences, and build strong support networks. This fosters a sense of community solidarity, which is essential for continued activism and mutual support among LGBTIQ+ individuals, allies, and other marginalized groups.



Participants gained valuable skills and insights through interactive discussions, panel sessions, and creative activities like the sip and paint. These sessions not only educated but also equipped individuals with practical tools to enhance their advocacy, personal well-being, and community engagement, fostering a more resilient and empowered group of activists.



Main Challenges

Challenge 1

Mission Impossible: Convening Edition!

Trying to keep everyone on schedule was like managing the crew in “Ocean’s Eleven”—everyone had their own agenda and getting them to move on felt like coordinating a heist. Between passionate debates, spontaneous networking, and tea breaks, getting folks to leave their sessions was like trying to pull Tom Cruise away from a stunt mid-air. But just like in the movies, we had our secret weapon—charismatic team members who swooped in, dropped a witty one-liner, and smoothly transitioned everyone to the next session. Mission accomplished... until the next break, of course!



Challenge 2

The Quest for the Perfect Hideout!

Finding a venue that was both a fortress of safety and a sanctuary of comfort felt like scouting locations for a top-secret Captain Planet mission. We needed a spot that would keep us hidden from the villains while making everyone feel like they were in the Batcave—secure and invincible. After dodging a few “nah, too risky” options and sidestepping some sketchy spots, we landed on our very own Wakanda! The result? Not a single incident!



Challenge 3

Lost in Translation Moments!

Some of our fabulous ethnic women participants brought their rich local languages to the mix, making English feel like a distant cousin. And navigating the language barrier was sometimes like a live game of charades—but hey, it kept things entertaining and taught us the true meaning of communication without words!



Close – Out Statement: *"United Voices for Inclusive Equality"*.

We gather in a spirit of unity to declare our shared commitment to inclusive equality as representatives of numerous minority groups, LGBTIQ+ activist, persons living with disabilities, intersex persons, sex workers, feminist partners, and ethnic women.

We acknowledge the interlocking forms of marginalization and prejudice that have long afflicted our society. We recognize the structural obstacles that rob us of our rights, diminish our self-worth, and continue oppressive cycles. However, we remain unfazed in the face of difficulty, finding strength in our shared difficulties and paving the road for a more fair and just future.

The intersectionality principles that acknowledge the interdependence of our identities and experiences form the foundation of our solidarity. We recognize that the abolition of all types of discrimination, including those based on gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, or occupation, is necessary to achieve real equality and that our liberation is interconnected.

As groups that are marginalized, we seek that our rights be respected and upheld without bias or violence. We support legislative changes, societal acceptance, and cultural integration while reaffirming our innate humanity and dignity. We proclaim our right to full engagement in all facets of society as individuals with disabilities. To secure our independence and well-being, we need inclusive policies, accessible infrastructure, and fair chances.

As intersex persons, we oppose binary conventions that aim to eradicate our identities and physical identities. We reject harmful practices that aim to force conformity and muffle our voices in favor of demanding acknowledgment, respect, and physical autonomy.

As sex workers, we stand up for our rights and demand a stop to the violence, prosecution, and stigmatization of our communities. We support the protection of our human rights, healthcare access, and the decriminalization of our line of work.

As feminist allies, we acknowledge the critical role that gender justice plays in our shared struggle and stand in solidarity with all marginalized groups. We raise the voices of women and non-binary people in support of their rights, security, and self-determination.

As ethnic women, we confront the intersecting oppressions of gender, ethnicity, and class that shape our lives. We reclaim our narratives, celebrate our cultures, and demand an end to the marginalization and invisibility that has long silenced our voices.

We pledge to work towards a common goal of inclusive equality in which each person is respected, honored, and cherished for the unique person that they are. We make a commitment to support one another's voices, elevate the underprivileged, and oppose the power structures that aim to create divisions among us.

We will keep building a movement that crosses boundaries, embraces diversity, and changes society by cooperation, communication, and solidarity. We fight not just for ourselves but also for the next generation, who should live in an oppression- and inequality-free society.

Let us keep the spirit of unity alive as we leave this gathering, knowing that when we come together, we can accomplish anything. "When we speak, we fear our words won't be heard or welcomed," Audre Lorde once said. However, even in silence, fear remains. So it is better to speak. Let us raise our voices, let our deeds speak louder than words, and let our unity serve as the guiding light towards a world that is more inclusive and just for everyone.



Future Plans

As we look ahead, Courageous Sisters Ghana is thrilled to announce some exciting plans that will keep our momentum going and ensure we continue to uplift our community!

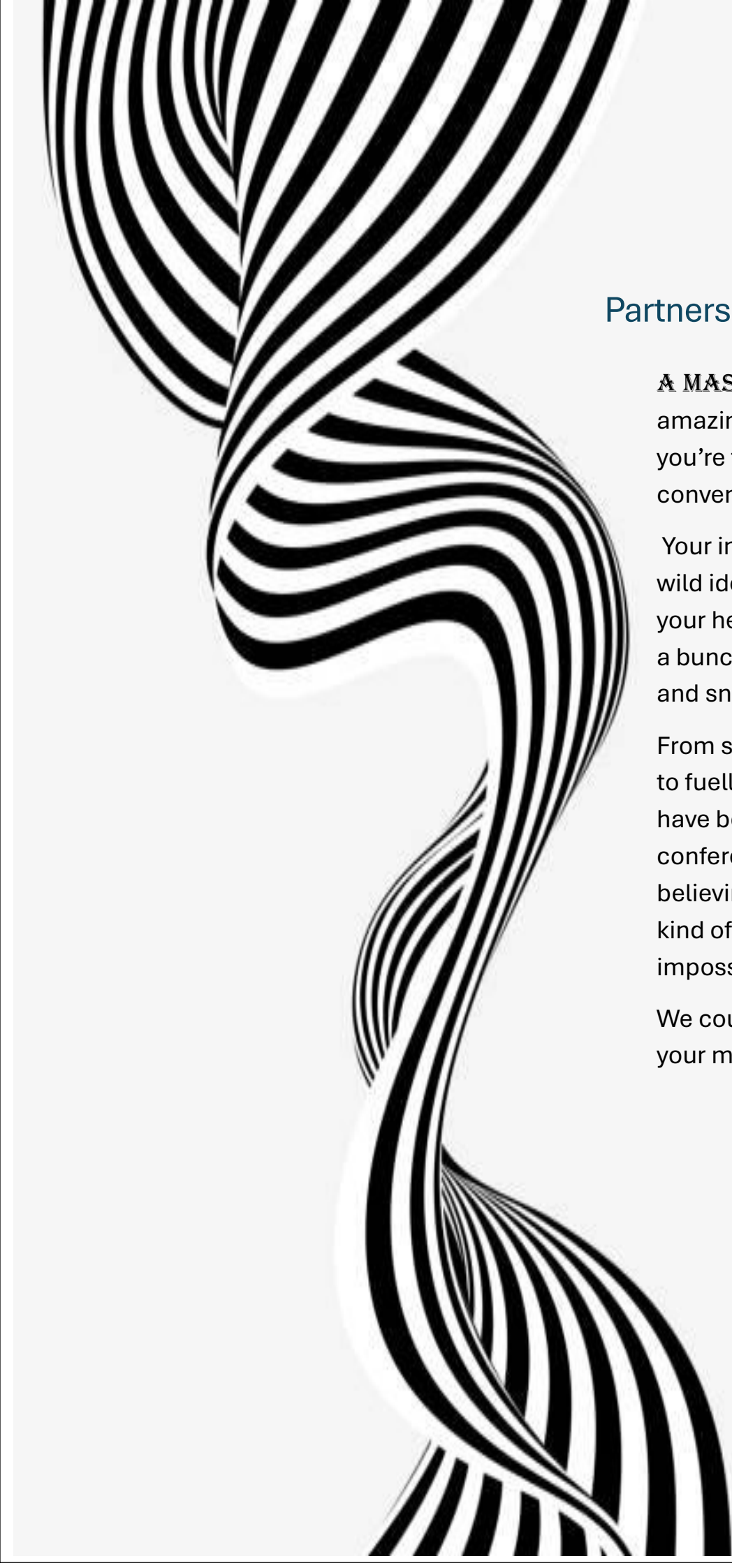
First on our agenda is the annual convening, where we will gather for more cross-movement learning and build even stronger bridges of solidarity. Think of it as our yearly family reunion, but packed with inspiration, knowledge, and collaboration!

Next, we are diving into research that tackles mental health narratives within the LBQT and GNC community. It's time to break down those barriers and shine a spotlight on the importance of mental wellness in our lives. We are all about transforming the conversation and supporting each other in this journey!

We are also excited to hold a donor and organization fair that allows various organizations to showcase their incredible work while building meaningful relationships with donors and stakeholders. Let's celebrate the amazing work being done while creating connections that will pave the way for future collaborations!

Moreover, we will be celebrating international memorial days with educational events that not only honour our history but also empower our community. Knowledge is power, and what better way to celebrate than by learning and growing together?

Last but not least, we are establishing our very own Peer Counselling and Lay Counselling unit. This initiative aims to provide safe spaces for individuals to share their experiences and receive support from their peers. It is all about fostering a nurturing environment where everyone feels heard and valued.



Partners and Donors

A MASSIVE SHOUTOUT to our amazing partners and donors—you're the real MVPs of this convening!

Your incredible support turned our wild ideas into reality, and without your help, we would have just been a bunch of people with a flip chart and snacks.

From sparking bold conversations to fuelling our drive for justice, you have been the wind beneath our conference wings. Thank you for believing in us and for being the kind of squad that makes impossible things happen.

We couldn't have done this without your magic!

Appreciation



Thank you

A huge thank you for your incredible participation and energy at our convening!

Your contributions truly made the event inspiring and impactful. We can't wait to come together again soon! In the meantime, don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

A huge thank you for your incredible participation and energy at our convening!

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let's Keep in
Touch!

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